

SOUTHWEST Connector

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ART ON THE EDGE DEBUTS IN LINDEN HILLS



Milwaukee area residents Mari Akre, PJ Akre, Marie Akre and Paul Akre look at the chalk art mandala, created under the guidance of Sandy Forseth for the Art on the Edge event in Linden Hills on July 23, 2022. The Akres were celebrating Mari's 65th birthday. "This is a really quaint place to hang out," said Paul Akre. "It's the little things that bring out joy. It isn't that far away. You just have to look for it." More on pages 2-3. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

A MORE AUTHENTIC DRINK

First-time business owners
bring East African Chai to
farmers markets

By **Evan Vezmar**

On a Sunday afternoon in July, the Kingfield Farmers Market bustles with people browsing the various offerings. Even as rain clouds loom overhead, one of the busiest tents belongs to Red Wolf Chai, founded by Mowafag Mohamed, Mohamed Yousif, and siblings Mayzer Abdusebur, Azhar Abdusebur, and Sumeya Abdusebur two years ago.

Through their tea business, they strive to introduce traditional and authentic chai tea to the Minneapolis community and also aim to make a positive impact on the city. The founders are from Sudan and the Oromia region in Ethiopia where chai tea is prevalent.

In an interview with Mohamed Yousif, he mentioned, "Essentially we all grew up on some form of chai. It's really big for us in East Africa. We drink it every day. We



COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMISSIONER BEING CONSIDERED BY CITY COUNCIL

Cedric Alexander may
manage new department
with fire, police, 911, office
of emergency management,
office of neighborhood safety

By **Cam Gordon**

On July 21, 2022, Mayor Jacob Frey's nomination of Cedric Alexander for Community Safety Commissioner was formally received by the city council, who is expected to vote on the appointment on Aug. 4 following a public hearing on Aug. 2.

The creation of this position was approved on June 30 along with a salary range of \$295,250 to \$350,000. That salary is above a cap set by the state legislature of \$192,144 for 2022, so the city is requesting, and needs, a waiver to pay that much for this job.

As recommended in the mayor's restructuring proposal and the ordinance being introduced by Ward 13 Council Member Linnea Palmisano, the commissioner will report to the mayor and lead



a new Office of Community Safety that, if approved, would include the fire and police departments, 911, the office of emergency management, and a new office of neighborhood safety that will replace or include the office of violence prevention now housed in the health department.

Frey announced his nomination and introduced Alexander at a press conference on July 7. "Government restructuring is probably the most important thing I will ever do as mayor," he said. "Today we are at a seminal moment in that work to reshape and redefine the way we serve the public for the purpose of safety."

He added, "This is a person with a wealth of experience, highly respected nationwide. We are thrilled to have him enter our city to make the kind of changes that we need see."

Alexander began his career in 1977 as a deputy sheriff in Leon County, Fla. and went on to have a long career in law enforcement, public safety, education and government. He was the director of public safety for DeKalb County, Ga. where he oversaw police, fire, emergency response, and 911, and Chief of Police. Later, he was deputy mayor for the city of Rochester (NY). He has served as deputy commissioner of



A WALK THROUGH TANGLETOWN

Lifetime resident Tom Balcom
points out historical and
present-day highlights of
Washburn Park

By **Tesha M. Christensen**

Today's Tangletown neighborhood used to be known as Washburn Park, and the high school, library and historic water tower still bear evidence of the family that transformed the space from farm fields.

Local historian, Tom Balcom, has lived in the area his entire life, and does walking tours through Preserve Minneapolis. The 2022 tour was held on Tuesday evening, July 19, and about 20 people spent 90 minutes on the 1.5-mile walk. He believes that local history is not about yesterday; it's the context for where we live today.

"I'm proud of the place I live and I



The Washburn Park water tower was designed by Henry Wild Jones, a neighborhood resident. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

like to tell people the history of it," said Balcom.

"One hundred and twenty years ago, this was all farmland. Then the city marched out. I don't think people have too much of a sense of that."

